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## House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
July 28, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE HOLDING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

### ENDING THE FEDERAL BAN ON MARIJUANA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, The New York Times produced a carefully balanced rationale for ending the Federal ban on marijuana. In more than 40 years, this failed attempt at prohibition has been hopelessly out of step.

The Times editorial points out the fallacy the as States marching toward decriminalization, medical marijuana,

and adult use, the Federal Government maintains its schizophrenic posture, pretending that marijuana is as dangerous—as heroin or LSD, worse than cocaine or methamphetamine.

While the current administration has been somewhat tolerant of the actions that have taken place in three-quarters of our States that are acting to decriminalize, authorize medical marijuana, and, more recently, in Colorado and Washington State, to legalize adult use, there is no guarantee that future administrations will have a lighter touch.

That is wrong. As the Times and others have pointed out, there are significant financial costs and huge human costs of this failed experiment in prohibition which, falls disproportionately on young men of color, especially African Americans.

The Times readily acknowledged that this issue has troubling aspects. We have all struggled, as a society, to deal with drugs, legal and illegal. Addiction to cigarettes and alcohol, prescription drugs and narcotics extracts a heavy toll.

We are all deeply concerned about the impact that marijuana and other dangerous substances have on young people. This is particularly a problem dealing with the development of the young brain affected by marijuana use.

While this clearly can have serious consequences, so, too, there are horrific costs associated with alcohol and tobacco, to say nothing of other illegal drugs. We, as a society, have struggled with these challenges, but we have actually had some measure of success with controlling use of cigarettes and alcohol.

The use by adults of tobacco has declined two-thirds in a generation. There is no reason to think we can't do the same for marijuana if we act rationally.

As a practical matter, the current system doesn't accomplish keeping it

out of the hands of children, while it does inflict that real damage on casual users and those young men of color.

Currently, there is a vast illegal network that supplies the public and children with marijuana. No one checks ID. There is no business license to use.

For those of us working to reform our flawed marijuana laws, the Times editorial marks a significant milestone, joining other publications and organizations arguing for a new approach. It comes while we in Oregon, which was the first State to decriminalize marijuana, will vote this fall to become the third State to legalize adult use.

The Times editorial and the promise of more discussion in the paper joins with other editorial pages across the country. The Portland Oregonian had a particularly thoughtful and very positive editorial just the day before, on Saturday, the 26th of July, talking about the opportunities in our State for legalization.

The Nation's editorial pages are playing a constructive role in promoting a broad, nuanced, careful discussion of the marijuana policy, its failure, and the alternatives. Here in Congress we have started the discussion and have seen growing awareness among significant floor action that slightly reduces the outmoded and illogical restrictions.

It is time for the administration and Congress to elevate this discussion to keep pace with what is going on with opinion leaders like the Nation's editorial writers and the march towards rational policy that is taking place in States across America.

It is not too late for this Congress to make constructive contributions. We have several opportunities: the cultivation of industrial hemp; changing banking regulations so we don't force legal marijuana businesses to be all cash; tax equity; and protecting medical marijuana from heavy-handed Federal interference.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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